

‘Charters, Northumbria and the Unification of England in the Tenth
and Eleventh Centuries’

Abstract

The extent to which southern kings of England, from the tenth century onwards, were able to claim authority over the kingdom of Northumbria, is a question of considerable importance in any consideration of the unification of England in the Anglo-Saxon period. Scholars have previously made use of a range of historical evidence in the pursuit of answers, including the testimony of, for example, narrative texts, coins and place-names. But the royal charters and diplomas of Anglo-Saxon Northumbria have never before been harnessed in such discussions and this article examines what they reveal about structures of power within England and likewise within Northumbria itself.*

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Charters, Northumbria and the Unification of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries*

At various points in the seventh century, the Northumbrian kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia, divided by the River Tees,¹ were notionally joined under the rulership of kings of the standing of Edwin and Oswald.² Bede describes the advantages brought by such united political rule. But despite this hypothetical unity within the kingdom of Northumbria itself, the indications are that divisions remained and modern scholarship has investigated the tendency of the Northumbrian kingdom to come apart at the seams, as it were, whenever significant internal or external pressure was applied. The very title of David Rollason's recent historical account emphasizes this phenomenon.³

From its emergence in the late seventh and early eighth centuries as a kingdom of Europe-wide significance,⁴ historians have described the effects of major political events like the manifold civil disturbances of the mid- to late eighth century,⁵ the arrival of vikings in number from 867,⁶ the incorporation of Northumbria within the wider Anglo-Saxon kingdom in the early tenth century and the arrival of the Normans in the late eleventh century and in particular the notorious 'harrying of the north' in 1069.⁷ In their examinations of these events, scholars have asked, for example, how far Northumbria constituted a kingdom independent of the rest of the country, how far it had its own methods of government and how long the division between Deira and Bernicia remained throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. These are self-evidently questions of the greatest importance and (nearly) the full range of available evidence has been deployed in the pursuit of answers, from archaeological remains and topographical patterns to the testimony of literary sources.⁸

But curiously one genre of text has been consistently overlooked: the royal diplomas and charters of Anglo-Saxon Northumbria.⁹ It may be that their very nature, often as rather dry accounts of land transactions, has been the cause of their neglect.¹⁰ Or perhaps it is the relatively small number to have survived from Northumbria as a whole (twenty-one documents scattered through five archives) which made them seem less than fruitful for Northumbrian purposes. Charters themselves, because of the serious difficulties involved in the assessment of their authenticity, are notoriously difficult to handle, and the lack, until recently, of a modern edition of the Northumbrian charters may be a further reason why this body of evidence has been neglected.¹¹

Nevertheless charters, as everyday administrative documents, illustrate the very backbone of routine Anglo-Saxon life and, as such, have much to tell us about structures of power and government. They provide information about royal aspirations seen, for example, by the use of certain royal styles and also about the realities of power on the ground – what territory could be granted where, and to whom it was being granted. Recent scholarship has emphasised the wide-ranging significance of diplomas as a body of historical evidence and the diverse range of functions they fulfilled. Koziol, in his study of Carolingian royal diplomas, classifies the diploma's 'performative' qualities: 'to say that diplomas were used as performatives is to argue that any given diploma was issued in order to institute, publicise, and memorialise a crucial alteration in the political regime'.¹² A close analysis of charter diplomatic is therefore intrinsic to any understanding of the politics of the time, and the Northumbrian charters demand attention for all of these reasons. It will be argued here that the form of the diplomas and charters preserved in the York and Durham archives has much more to tell us than merely about the land being granted.¹³ In fact their diplomatic elements provide information about the realities of

military conquest and political expansion, political strategy and aspiration and finally the interactions between English kings and two of the most powerful institutions in the north, the church of York and St Cuthbert's community.

Anglo-Saxon diplomas were introduced at some point in the seventh century and the earliest surviving examples date from the 670s.¹⁴ They were initially instruments of the Church, designed to grant land and privileges in perpetuity and giving the beneficiary ownership of what is known as 'bookland' (*bocland*).¹⁵ Unfortunately no Northumbrian diplomas from this early period survive but it is nevertheless clear that they were in plentiful supply: not only does the *Vita Wilfridi* include a passage which seems clearly to be relying on some kind of diploma, but Bede, in his *Epistola ad Ecgbertum*, seems to be decrying the abuse of these documents by laymen in terms which imply that the diploma was widely used in Northumbria even by the early eighth century.¹⁶ Given that charters survive in very large numbers in ecclesiastical archives elsewhere in England,¹⁷ and given that charters were indeed in use in early Northumbria, it is all the more striking that there are now so few extant Northumbrian examples. This disparity in survival rates for charters from different areas of the country may itself be illuminating since the possibility remains that political conditions were such in Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Northumbria that these documents were perhaps less likely to survive.¹⁸ One could also argue that it is indicative of a society which was rather less dependent on the written word and certainly there is evidence to suggest that various forms of oral ceremonies took place where the granting of land could be confirmed simply by the presence of key individuals.¹⁹ The danger in taking either of these suggestions too far is that they involve an *argumentum e silentio*.

The earliest surviving genuine Northumbrian diploma dates to the reign of King Æthelstan and is preserved in the archives of York minster.²⁰ By this stage in the tenth century, Northumbria, and in particular York and its immediate hinterlands, had already been subjected to Scandinavian conquest and settlement.²¹ There had been a number of viking kings based at York, many of whom also had power in Dublin.²² Of course this viking presence had major ramifications for those in Northumbria. Most obviously, in York and the surrounding area, native Northumbrian kings were now replaced by the Scandinavian incomers; and the concentration of Scandinavian rule and settlement in territory south of the River Tees, evidenced especially by place-names and sculpture,²³ actually led to a re-emphasising of the division between the ancient kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia,²⁴ with the north of Northumbria experiencing far less viking intrusion.²⁵

The practicalities of rule in Northumbria, and of the relationships between those in power, must also have been in a state of flux. From the evidence of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and coins, we can see that there was a relatively rapid turnover of viking kings in York, at the same time as the house of Wessex, from the reign of Alfred onwards, was becoming ever more conscious of the wider Anglo-Saxon 'polity'.²⁶ How these competing political strands manifested themselves in Northumbria is not always visible to the modern historian, far less the effect these influences had on any sense of what it was to be 'Northumbrian'. Northumbria had rarely before been subject to the power of another kingdom or outside ruler and so the arrival of vikings must have been all the more catastrophic. Extant Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture, place-names and coins speak of some kind of accommodation between Northumbrian and Scandinavian,²⁷ but the political machinations of Archbishop Wulfstan I (d. 956) in the tenth century serve as a reminder that native

Northumbrians in positions of power were seeking any opportunity to advance the *status quo* in a bid to maintain Northumbrian independence.²⁸

In the court of King Alfred in the 890s, in the face of ever-increasing viking pressure, a sense of Anglo-Saxon identity encompassing more than just Wessex, began to grow and take shape. As part of this evolution of ‘the kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons’, members of Alfred’s immediate circle took steps to encourage neighbouring kingdoms to support the Alfredian (and thus Anglo-Saxon) cause. In Asser’s *Vita Alfredi* we see a Welsh cleric resident at Alfred’s court appealing to his native audience back in Wales and trying to persuade them of the strengths of this king of the West Saxon line.²⁹ The presence of a West Saxon ambassador in York soon afterwards suggests that a similar appeal was being made to Northumbria.³⁰ But it was not until 927, following a military conquest by Alfred’s grandson, Æthelstan, that Northumbria was for the first time subjected to southern authority.³¹

It is important to try to understand the kind of relationship between northern and southern kingdoms that this conquest engendered. Given that Northumbria had already been subjected to some fifty years of viking rule and viking kings, a period that saw York become somehow linked to another viking kingdom, Dublin, the change to being ruled by an Anglo-Saxon from the house of Wessex must have been momentous. Certainly we know that from Æthelstan’s point of view this was a significant event. One manifestation of his military success was the consolidation of a group of men of no little learning, many of whom had continental origins, at the centre of his court.³² The poems these scholars produced have been examined in detail by Michael Lapidge, and one in particular, *Carta dirige gressus*, seems to have been written in the immediate aftermath of Æthelstan’s victory in Northumbria, celebrating as it does ‘ista perfecta Saxonia’ (‘England (now) made whole’).³³

But this poem has further importance because it demonstrates the existence of a group of clerks in service of the king, who could be called upon at significant moments in the reign to write commemorative works.³⁴ It was also at this time that a centralized agency, responsible for the routine production of the king's diplomas, emerges into plain view.³⁵ Between 928 and 935, one royal scribe was clearly entrusted with a monopoly of diploma production. Known as 'Æthelstan A',³⁶ he was a draftsman of great genius. In an attempt to produce diplomas which could somehow convey a sense of the serious political advances made by his king, 'Æthelstan A' remodelled the very form of the diploma and made use of Latin of a kind that had never before been deployed within the context of an Anglo-Saxon diploma.³⁷

The incorporation of Northumbria, resulting in a newly unified Anglo-Saxon England, was therefore mirrored at the centre of government by the organizational changes with regard to the administration and production of diplomas. Just as Æthelstan made use of a royal retinue of clerks to compose various poetical pieces to celebrate key moments in his reign, so he also called upon his royal draftsman, 'Æthelstan A', to draft diplomas no matter where the land was being granted in the country.³⁸ Two of these diplomas survive in their original form.³⁹ An examination of the whole corpus of 'Æthelstan A' diplomas reveals that this draftsman was acutely aware of the individual circumstances of each grant of land. Not content simply to recycle diplomatic formulae he had previously used, he can be found adapting and altering his Latin. Sometimes these changes are made simply for stylistic reasons, but on some occasions it is clear that he is reacting to the political circumstances of the grant.⁴⁰

The earliest surviving diploma from Northumbria is just one of these 'Æthelstan A' documents, S 407 (*North 1*), a grant of Amounderness, a very large area of land on the north-west coast, to the York church. Preserved in the York

archive, it survives as a copy in a late thirteenth-century York cartulary, British Library, Cotton MSS, Claudius B III, and in a vast fourteenth-century cartulary known as the *Magnum registrum album*, where it has been copied twice.⁴¹ Because it does not exist in its original, tenth-century single-sheet form, there is the possibility that some of its diplomatic elements have been altered, whether deliberately or accidentally, by later copyists. The alteration to its dating-clause, in line with another dating-clause in a Worcester diploma, S 428 (BCS 701), shows the kinds of changes that could be made. As Dorothy Whitelock explained, this change was probably made at a time when the York and Worcester churches were held in plurality and on its own it does not condemn the document as a forgery.⁴²

Nevertheless, there are diplomatic peculiarities present in S 407 (*North 1*) which have previously suggested to scholars that it should be regarded as a forgery.⁴³ It is worth brief discussion of one of these elements because it seems actually to reveal something of the difficulties faced by a southern king granting land in the north to a Northumbrian institution perhaps for the first time. The formula in question is the boundary-clause. By this stage in the evolution of the diploma, one would expect the boundary-clause both to be in Old English and to be rather detailed, taking into account specific local features like hills, barrows, meadows, homesteads and so on.⁴⁴ It is likely that while the main body of the diploma was drafted by the royal scribe, ‘Æthelstan A’, some local official was responsible first for the delineation of the estate being granted, and then for sending this description to the meeting of the witan at which the diploma was being granted, so that it could be incorporated within the diploma itself.⁴⁵ Both of the extant ‘Æthelstan A’ originals, S 416 (BCS 677) and S 425 (*CantCC* 106), have such an Old English boundary-clause. But the boundary-clause in S 407 (*North 1*) is written in Latin and lacks this kind of minute local detail. Instead it uses rivers to give the outer limits of a huge amount of land on the north-

west coast of the country.⁴⁶ It seems reasonable to suggest that, in making this grant in 934 to the York church, Æthelstan and his draftsman 'Æthelstan A' were confronted with the problem of never having employed any kind of local Northumbrian official previously to compose a boundary-clause to be included within a diploma.⁴⁷

S 407 (*North 1*) therefore offers a snapshot of conditions in the north in 934 and of the realities of political interaction between an Anglo-Saxon king and a newly conquered territory. Once Northumbria had been subjugated by force, Æthelstan would have found the everyday practicalities of ruling there problematic. It would have been important for him to win over local institutions (and powerful individuals) and none could be more significant in this regard than York minster, which had stood as the pre-eminent institution in York (and what was Deira) from the early seventh century. That Æthelstan was able to make use of a document, the diplomatic form of which identifies it as a product of his own chancery, in his dealings with this northern establishment, is itself suggestive of the political ground he had won.⁴⁸ And this is further emphasized by the fact that the York church kept a copy of the document, thinking that it could be of value in later years, and thereby acknowledging the legal authority that such a document held in Northumbria.⁴⁹

These were very real political and administrative advances into the northern kingdom. Æthelstan's granting of this chancery document to the York church, issued at a meeting of the witan at which all of the major political and ecclesiastical figures were present, would have sent a powerful message about his newly-won tenure of the north, drawing on the 'performative' qualities of the diploma.⁵⁰ These advances can be mirrored, to a certain extent, by the evidence of coinage: here Æthelstan was able to put an end to viking issues which had been in circulation previously and instead the York mint began to produce coins of the 'church', 'circumscription cross' and 'bust crowned' types, thus bringing this part of Northumbria further into line with monetary

circulation elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon England.⁵¹ At the same time Æthelstan's newly elevated political status was recognized by the use of a royal style that was novel in the context of coin production, *rex totius Britannie*, and which emulated the same style found in contemporary diplomas. In coins, however, just as in diplomas, adjustments had to be made according to local custom, and some of the designs of the coins, although broadly similar to coins used elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon England, nevertheless had their own idiosyncracies. Perhaps most notably, the majority of coins were struck only by one moneyer (Regnald) while the minting of coins in general in Northumbria was confined to the York mint, features uncommon in other parts of the country.⁵² The combined evidence of diplomas and coins therefore allows some impression of the advances Æthelstan was able to make in Northumbria following 927, but also of the practical difficulties in taking outright control of this northern kingdom and of the degree of continued Northumbrian independence.⁵³

As has been already mentioned, the area of land granted in S 407 (*North 1*), Amounderness, represents an exceptionally large amount of territory on the north-west coast of Britain. The location and the size of the grant are immediately striking, as are the exact terms on which the land was acquired and then given to the York church. Situated in an area of the country that had already been settled by Scandinavians,⁵⁴ one possibility, indicated by the place-name, is that this area of land had once belonged as a block to a certain viking called *Qgmundr* or *Agmundr*.⁵⁵ Whether or not this is true, the land was unquestionably taken from a zone of significant importance to Scandinavians, on one part of the coast where viking kings crossing from Dublin, with the intention of moving onwards to York, perhaps would have landed.⁵⁶ This was therefore a politically charged grant of land, designed to discourage the York community from welcoming Scandinavians to York in the future, and certainly not to side with them in the manner in which previous York archbishops

had done.⁵⁷ In the early 930s Constantine, king of the Scots, and Olaf Guthfrithson, king of Dublin, had forged a bond through a marriage alliance and so Æthelstan would have been acutely aware of the dangers of a joint threat from these two kingdoms to the west and north.⁵⁸ S 407 (*North 1*) was one way to win over York itself, but simultaneously also to remove the Scandinavian threat. And this Scandinavian dimension helps to explain another diplomatic irregularity in S 407 (*North 1*), that Æthelstan is said to have bought the land for himself from his own money, before granting it to the York church.⁵⁹ Normally the recipient of the grant of land would have been responsible for the purchase and we can only surmise that something rather remarkable is encapsulated in the details of S 407 (*North 1*), a shrewd political manoeuvre on the part of Æthelstan when faced with a kingdom that had been so accustomed to welcoming and embracing vikings as their rulers.⁶⁰ It is perhaps unlikely that the York church was ever able to take actual control of this vast north-western territory,⁶¹ but what mattered was the symbolism involved for both sides: that Æthelstan could impose his will in the north, and that the York church was prepared to accept his authority, at least for the moment.

S 407 (*North 1*) was granted on 7 June 934 at Nottingham, as Æthelstan made his way northwards to campaign in Scotland. One of his next stopping-places saw him pay a visit to another important Northumbrian religious community, that of St Cuthbert, then housed at Chester-le-Street.⁶² Here the ecclesio-political situation confronting Æthelstan was rather different. At York he met a religious community that had had to engineer its survival during an extended period of Scandinavian rule in York itself. But the evidence of place-names and archaeological remains suggests that to the north of the River Tees, Scandinavians had not made such significant inroads, with the result that the Cuthbertines could perhaps operate with a greater degree of freedom.⁶³ Having been left vulnerable on the island of Lindisfarne, Cuthbert's

community had already taken the momentous decision to relocate itself inland and, c. 875, its inhabitants set out on a fabled period of seven years' wandering across the north of England, finally to come to rest at Chester-le-Street in c. 883. Although the move from Lindisfarne was clearly prompted by the fear of external attack, Rollason has shown that the subsequent period of wandering was carefully planned by the community, as it visited many of its outlying properties, perhaps by way of affirming its bonds with, and ownership over, these places.⁶⁴ And the move to Chester-le-Street had further important political implications, since it brought the Cuthbertines closer to the growing power in England, that of kings of the West Saxon line. By the time Æthelstan arrived in Chester-le-Street in 934, Cuthbert's community had become one of the most influential institutions in this northern part of Northumbria.

Æthelstan's dealings with St Cuthbert's community speak of this different political situation. Again the English king made gifts of property and of other precious items. But what is very striking is the *absence* of any formal 'Æthelstan A' diploma to record these gifts, of the kind that had earlier been used in conjunction with York minster. Instead it was St Cuthbert's community itself that took responsibility for the recording of Æthelstan's visit. Towards the beginning of the Durham *Liber Vitae*, at the head of a list commemorating the names of 'kings and earls', Æthelstan's name has been inserted, possibly by the same scribe responsible for C[ambridge] C[orpus] C[hristi] C[ollege] 183 and for various diplomas,⁶⁵ out of chronological sequence and thus in a position of unusual prominence. It seems remarkable that Cuthbert's community was willing to accommodate and recognise the importance of this southern king in the context of one of their most revered manuscripts.⁶⁶ But perhaps the record is not simply one of admiration for Æthelstan. Notes of land transactions from later in the tenth and early eleventh centuries, as we will see, demonstrate that it was the practice of St Cuthbert's community not to use

mainstream diplomas of the type favoured by ‘Æthelstan A’ but rather to make brief notes in Old English into their own high status manuscripts. While there is no detail about any kind of gift or grant of land connected to the listing of Æthelstan’s name, its very insertion may have been effected by the Cuthbertine community as part of an attempt to bind the new king of England to their cause.

Records surviving from the Durham archive suggest that land transactions involving St Cuthbert’s community were enacted quite differently from elsewhere in the country. Instead of being written in the form of a Latin royal diploma, including diplomatic elements such as the verbal invocation, the proem, the royal superscription, the dispositive clause and so on, these records constitute brief notices of land transactions, with really only the bare detail of the name of the estate being granted and also the name of the grantor. They are written in Old English rather than Latin and, perhaps most crucially of all, they are made over directly to St Cuthbert himself, or the church of St Cuthbert, and entered into one of the community’s most valued manuscripts.⁶⁷ Only three examples of these kinds of record survive from Durham, all copies of which date to the late tenth or early eleventh centuries and were made into the Durham *Liber Vitae*.⁶⁸ The use of gospel-books, or other high status manuscripts, for such everyday records, is not unique in Anglo-Saxon England and instances survive, for example, in Worcester and Canterbury.⁶⁹ But two points in particular make the Cuthbert examples different: firstly, the involvement of Cuthbert himself since the land was granted directly to the saint (or the church of the saint) and threats for violation of the grant can likewise invoke his name; secondly, that these are the *only* kinds of original records to have survived from this northern church, whereas in other churches, they take their place alongside a range of different kinds of documentation, including so-called mainstream royal diplomas.⁷⁰

The making of the grant to St Cuthbert (or St Cuthbert's church), and the entering of the note into a precious manuscript closely associated with the saint and his community, were methods clearly designed to involve the otherworldly force of the community's revered saint, one who was less likely to be defrauded of possessions and privileges. By the later Anglo-Saxon period, scholars have noted the changed image of St Cuthbert, who had evolved from the pious figure of early, eighth-century hagiography, to one accustomed to reclaiming land from defrauders in the most ruthless of fashions.⁷¹ This metamorphosis of Cuthbert's character helps us to understand the brief, Old English records of land transactions. Perhaps we are entitled to believe that the situation was such in Anglo-Saxon Northumbria beyond the River Tees that a so-called mainstream royal diploma had little chance of being recognised or acknowledged, to the extent that the Cuthbertines took matters into their own hands and employed an idiosyncratic approach that revolved around the figure of their most important saint.⁷²

Further traces of this unique approach to the recording of land transactions can be found in other manuscripts and texts connected with St Cuthbert's community. In 1925 H. H. E. Craster identified the manuscript, London, Lincoln's Inn, Hales 114, as being one and the same as the *Liber Ruber* of Durham, a book which was described as containing royal charters and privileges granted to the bishops of Durham.⁷³ The Hales manuscript actually comprises two manuscripts bound together, and Craster showed that the first manuscript contained a copy of a history of the Durham church entitled, 'Libellus de exordio et statu ecclesie cathedralis quondam Lindesfarnensis, post Conchestrensis, demum Dunelmensis, ac de gestis pontificum eiusdem', a work originally written by Wessington 'probably before he became prior in 1416'.⁷⁴ While this work by Wessington is in many respects derivative of earlier texts, Craster showed that its main interest was a series of passages which could not be found in any

other source and which were said, in the margin of the Hales manuscript, to come ‘Ex libro summi altaris ecclesie Dunelmensis’.⁷⁵ Unfortunately this ‘liber summi altaris’ no longer exists but Craster showed that it must have been a gospel-book kept on the high altar of Durham (in the same manner as the Durham *Liber Vitae*) into which charters and other such documents were inserted or copied.

Craster also recognised that the ‘liber summi altaris’ must originally have contained a chronicle recounting the history of the see of Durham until the time of William I. And, on the basis of five sources which contained excerpts from the ‘liber summi altaris’, Craster recreated this chronicle and demonstrated that it was written between 1072 and 1083.⁷⁶ In one manuscript it is named the *Cronica monasterii Dunelmensis* and that is how it is referred to by Craster (hereafter *Cronica*).⁷⁷ So this gospel-book must have been of great interest, containing both copies of documents like charters but also a chronicle. Although the *Cronica* relies extensively on the *HSC*, and shares material with Symeon’s *Libellus de exordio* which was written later in the early twelfth century,⁷⁸ it does also have unique material, which sheds further light on practices regarding land transactions at St Cuthbert’s community.⁷⁹

Two passages from the *Cronica* are worth further analysis.⁸⁰ The first describes how King Edmund, while on his way to Scotland with an army, came to Durham and deposited many precious gifts at the tomb of Cuthbert. Many of these details are found elsewhere in the *HSC* and later in Symeon’s *LDE*.⁸¹ But the *Cronica* has extra, unique information. It describes how Edmund gave the following gifts,

...armillas duas et ipse a brachio suo extrahens, ut vulgo dicitur, mid fullom indome, et wrec et wite, utter et inner, et saca et socne, id est cum plenis legibus et quietudinibus, super sepulcrum obtulit, terribili malediccione feriens omnes, si qui forte vel sua vel antecessorum

suorum privilegia huic ecclesie collata aliquo modo violare
presumpsissent.⁸²

In the first two lines of this extract the *Cronica* shifts from Latin to Old English in outlining the limits of the rights and gifts being granted (*mid fullom indome, et wrec et wite, utter et inner, et saca et socne...*). The word *indome* is otherwise unattested but the expression seems to mean something like, ‘...with full authority (or jurisdiction/power), and vengeance and punishment, outside and inside [i.e. the lands of St Cuthbert], and [with] sake and soke...’.⁸³ Could this change in language suggest that the chronicler was here relying on some kind of Old English record of a grant by Edmund, perhaps of the same form as those found in the Durham *Liber Vitae*, S 1660 (*North* 18), S 1659 (*North* 19) and S 1661 (*North* 20)? The outlining of the rights and gifts being granted in this manner reads similarly to relevant clauses in mainstream Anglo-Saxon writs, but the terms ‘indome’, ‘wrec et wite’ and ‘utter et inner’, seem to find no exact parallel there.⁸⁴ Perhaps a closer comparison can be made with a series of episcopal and royal forgeries made in Durham in the late twelfth century.⁸⁵ In particular, a purported notification of Bishop William of St Calais, dated spuriously to 1093, outlines in general the liberties of the prior and monks of Durham and, in doing so, uses a clause which has similar, although not identical, elements to that found in this eleventh-century chronicle.⁸⁶ The recurrence of some of these terms in a family of forgeries from the late twelfth century in itself raises suspicion. But if Craster is correct in his assignment of the chronicle to the period 1072 to 1083,⁸⁷ then it would naturally have formed one possible source for the writing of these later episcopal and royal forgeries and the suspicion need not necessarily fall on the chronicle’s entry itself.⁸⁸ For the moment, it remains possible that the use of these Old English terms in this part of the chronicle in the ‘*liber summi altaris*’ betrays the previous existence of a grant recorded in the vernacular by King Edmund.⁸⁹

The extract from the chronicle quoted above then ends with a quasi-sanction in which Edmund threatens a ‘terrible curse’ (*terribili malediccione*) on anyone who dares to violate the privileges given to St Cuthbert’s church either by him or by any of his ancestors, an element not found in the *HSC* or the *LDE*. It is possible that this is a Latin rendering of a formula again belonging to an originally Old English record since the extant vernacular records of land grants in the Durham *Liber Vitae* do contain comparable threats.⁹⁰ Finally it is notable, for reasons to which we shall return, that Edmund makes the gifts directly to ‘the church of Holy Mary, Mother of God, and of the holy confessor, Cuthbert’ (*ad ecclesiam sancte Dei genitricis Marie et sancti confessoris Cuthberti*), and that the gifts were explicitly offered at the tomb of St Cuthbert.

Having detailed Edmund’s gifts to the Cuthbertine church, the *Cronica* continues with a passage describing how Edmund’s brother, Eadred, confirmed the law(s) and liberties granted to the church by his predecessors and also offered further royal gifts (*regia munera*).⁹¹ Notice of any royal grant by Eadred does not appear in the *HSC* but does appear, in abbreviated form, in Symeon’s *LDE*, perhaps using this very *Cronica* as its source.⁹² The *Cronica* then concludes its passage about Eadred by clarifying that he made these gifts, ‘et full indome super sancti Cuthberti sepulcrum manu propria donavit’.⁹³ The use of the Old English words *full indome* again raises the possibility that the author was relying on some kind of vernacular record of the original land grant by King Eadred.

These extracts, taken from a chronicle written in a gospel-book that once rested on the high altar in Durham, reveal that any grant made to the community was made directly to St Cuthbert himself; and this is confirmed by the similar form of contemporary Old English notes found in the Durham *Liber Vitae* and by records of gifts in the *HSC*. But they also show the importance placed on the gifts being made

directly at the tomb of St Cuthbert. In total we know of four precious manuscripts used by the Cuthbertines for the recording of land transactions and other such historical memoranda (like manumissions).⁹⁴ Of these four, at least two (this lost gospel-book and the Durham *Liber Vitae*) were certainly kept and displayed on the high altar in the Cuthbertine church. Given that the *Cronica* places such an emphasis on the tomb (and thus the body) of St Cuthbert, one can begin to appreciate the importance of ceremony in land transactions involving Cuthbert's community.⁹⁵ It is not such a leap to imagine a southern English king like Æthelstan, Edmund or Eadred, being made to swear his gifts to the community over the body of St Cuthbert, while also witnessing an Old English record of the gift being inserted into a precious book kept on the altar. There could be no better way of guaranteeing the gift and of making the grantor aware of the reciprocal relationship into which he was entering.

From the early tenth century onwards, kings of the West Saxon line attempted, to a greater extent than before, to assert their authority over Northumbria, thereby drawing it within a wider English kingdom. The diplomatic form of the tenth- and eleventh-century documents (and texts) preserved from York and Durham indicates that the old division of the kingdom along the line of the River Tees was in some sense still in existence and therefore that these southern kings must have experienced differing degrees of success in their quest for unification.⁹⁶ While the York see had been willing, and able, to accept documents which belong squarely within the southern diplomatic mainstream, St Cuthbert's community, one of the major institutions beyond the Tees, was less receptive to documents of this type. Of course it would be of great interest to know more about the practical ramifications of this situation. Was it just the Cuthbertine community that operated outside this southern legal and administrative framework, or was their approach indicative of a stance that was more

widely adopted in what had been Bernicia? If southern royal diplomas and charters failed to gain substantial ground in this northern part of Northumbria, it would have significant implications for the extent to which the whole of Northumbria may be judged to have been truly part of Anglo-Saxon England. One reason why Domesday Book itself fails to take account of land north of the Tees is perhaps that there had been rather less systematic an approach to land grants, and the formal structures and divisions of land were effected in different ways.

But it may be equally likely that the political situation throughout Northumbria was more complicated than a straightforward division along the River Tees and between these two ancient kingdoms. For example, in the *HSC* itself, one section seems at least vaguely to recall some elements, or the overall structure, of mainstream diplomas. It records a grant by Styr, son of Ulf, of the vill of Darlington which Styr is said to have received from King Æthelred Unræd. Styr also gave other lands which he had bought with his own money and so this passage of the *HSC* combines the details of several land grants made to St Cuthbert's community.⁹⁷ It begins with a formula which is reminiscent of a verbal invocation; proceeds with a sort of dispositive statement in which Styr, in the first person singular, grants land to St Cuthbert; proceeds to name some of the witnesses to the grant; and concludes with a kind of sanction. In other words there are elements present which, although not exactly similar to diplomas issued elsewhere in the country in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, nevertheless evoke their intentions and structure. And the record in the *HSC* may, on two occasions, provide an indication as to why this grant had been recorded in this slightly different manner, when it states that the vill of Darlington had first of all been granted by King Æthelred and then also that the grant by Styr as a whole had been made in the presence of archbishops, bishops and magnates in York under the guidance of King Æthelred. When a grant of land passed from one

beneficiary to another and there was a diploma already recording the grant, there was no need for the beneficiary to have a new diploma composed. So perhaps Styr, having already received the grant of land from King Æthelred, simply passed on the diploma to St Cuthbert's community, and traces of its formulation then found their way into this part of the *HSC*, apparently in contrast to the usual practice adopted by the religious community. It may also be of importance that the meeting in which Styr made the grant was said to have taken place at York, since we have already seen that York in this period was receptive to southern forms of administration and documentation. Perhaps, then, for these rather exceptional reasons, of a grant that incorporated a previous transaction, and one that was not made at St Cuthbert's tomb, the *HSC* preserves a slightly different kind of record.

One other northern document survives as a further note of caution against too rigid a generalisation. S 1243 (*North* 21) is a writ issued at some point in the mid- to late eleventh century in the name of a certain Gospatric, concerning land in the north-west of the country.⁹⁸ It is of great importance both as a unique Anglo-Saxon documentary survival from this part of the country and because of its diplomatic form. It is cast in the mould of a mainstream Anglo-Saxon writ but with various words and phrases inserted clearly on the basis of local usage.⁹⁹ From this perspective, it is possible to see the kinds of changes that were made to these southern diplomas, charters and writs to fit in with Northumbrian practice. And it is striking that while St Cuthbert's community had embarked on their own, idiosyncratic approach to the documentation of land grants, Gospatric can be found, further to the west, making use of a mainstream writ but adapting it where necessary. It is reminiscent of the ways in which S 407 (*North* 1), granted to the York church, modified some of its standard 'Æthelstan A' formulation to take account of the recent absorption of Northumbria.

As southern kings spread their political dominion northwards, as part of an attempt to incorporate Northumbria within their control, they would have encountered numerous complications. Northumbria itself had a long history of divisions of power and territory and so one obvious check on southern hegemony would have been the entrenched interests of different institutions and peoples. In his journey northwards in 934, Æthelstan was acutely aware of such issues, at one moment employing his royal scribe to compose a quite remarkable diploma for the York church but at another witnessing his name being entered into a precious manuscript closely associated with the memory of St Cuthbert and of St Cuthbert's church more generally.¹⁰⁰ So the combined evidence of the Northumbrian charters as a whole helps demonstrate not only the ongoing divisions within Northumbria itself, but also the realities involved in any attempt to forge a united Anglo-Saxon England.

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¹ For the River Tees as the likely boundary, see P. H. Blair, 'The Boundary between Bernicia and Deira', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th series, XXVII (1949), 46-59 (repr. in his *Anglo-Saxon Northumbria*, ed. M. Lapidge and Pauline H. Blair (1984), no. V). For further discussion of these early Northumbrian kingdoms, see, for example, B. Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England* (London and New York, 1990), pp. 72-99.

² For the extent of Edwin's power, see Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (hereafter Bede, *HE*), in *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), II 17; for Oswald's unification of Deira and Bernicia, see Bede, *HE* III 6.

³ D. W. Rollason, *Northumbria, 500-1100: Creation and Destruction of a Kingdom* (Cambridge, 2003).

⁴ For a broad assessment of this period of Northumbrian history, taking into account archaeology, history, material culture and manuscripts, see *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. J. Hawkes and S. Mills (Stroud, 1999).

⁵ D. W. Rollason, 'Hagiography and Politics in Eighth-Century Northumbria', in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and their Contexts*, ed. P. Szarmach (New York, 1996), pp. 95-114; for a slightly earlier period, see D. P. Kirby, 'The Genesis of a Cult: Cuthbert of Farne and Ecclesiastical Politics in Northumbria in the Late Seventh and Early Eighth Centuries', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, XLVI (1995), 383-97.

⁶ The extent of the viking impact on different parts of Northumbria (and indeed on the country as a whole) is an area of much scholarly debate. See, for example, C. D. Morris, 'Northumbria and the Viking Settlement: the Evidence for Land-holding', *AA* 5, V (1977), 83-103; *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. D. M. Hadley and J. D. Richards (Turnhout, 2000); L. Abrams and D. N. Parsons, 'Place-Names and the History of Scandinavia Settlement in England', in *Land, Sea and Home*, ed. J. Hines, A. Lane and M. Redknap, (Leeds, 2004), pp. 379-431; *Aspects of Anglo-Scandinavian York*, ed. R. A. Hall et al. (York Archaeological Trust, 2004); D. M. Hadley, *The Vikings in England: Settlement, Society and Culture* (Manchester, 2006); C. Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: the Dynasty of Ívarr to A.D. 1014* (Edinburgh, 2007).

⁷ For the unification of England, and the incorporation of Northumbria see, for example, P. Stafford, *Unification and Conquest: a Political and Social History of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London and New York, 1989); S. Keynes, 'England, c. 900-1016', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, III: c. 900-c. 1024*, ed. T. Reuter (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 456-84. For the effects of the Norman Conquest on Northumbria, see W. E. Knappe, *The Norman Conquest of the North: the Region and its Transformation, 1000-1135* (1979); D. Palliser, 'Domesday Book and the "Harrying of the North"', *Northern History*, XXIX (1993), 1-23; P. Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship, Yorkshire, 1066-1154* (Cambridge, 1994); W. Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans: the Church of Durham, 1071-1153* (Woodbridge, 1998); and Rollason, *Northumbria*, pp. 282-90.

⁸ For a recent assessment of what a mixture of archaeological and historical investigation can tell us about the Northumbrian kingdom, see *Early Medieval Northumbria: Kingdoms and Communities, AD*

450-1100, ed. D. Petts and S. Turner (Turnhout, 2011); for an investigation of various *foci* of power in early Northumbria, see I. N. Wood, 'Monasteries and the Geography of Power in the Age of Bede', *NH*, XLV (2008), 11-25.

⁹ For an overview of the nature of Anglo-Saxon royal diplomas and charters, see S. Keynes, 'Church Councils, Royal Assemblies, and Anglo-Saxon Royal Diplomas', in *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. G. Owen-Crocker and B. W. Schneider (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 17-182. For what the charters of Burton Abbey can tell us about the incorporation of Mercia and Northumbria within England, see P. H. Sawyer, 'The Charters of Burton Abbey and the Unification of England', *NH*, X (1975), 28-39.

¹⁰ Nevertheless, for the possibilities offered by examination of charters, see F. M. Stenton, *The Latin Charters of the Anglo-Saxon Period* (Oxford, 1955).

¹¹ See now D. A. Woodman, *Charters of Northern Houses*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 16 (Oxford, 2012). For previous editions of selections of these documents, see *Early Yorkshire Charters*, vol. I, ed. W. Farrer (Edinburgh, 1914); C. R. Hart, *The Early Charters of Northern England and the North Midlands* (Leicester, 1975).

¹² G. Koziol, *The Politics of Memory and Identity in Carolingian Royal Diplomas: the West Frankish Kingdom (840-987)* (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 1-62 (at p. 3 for the quotation).

¹³ The diplomas and writs preserved in the archives of Beverley and Ripon are less useful in this regard.

¹⁴ For the introduction of Anglo-Saxon diplomas, see P. Chaplais, 'Who Introduced Charters into England? The Case for Augustine', *Journal of the Society of Archivists* (hereafter *JSA*) III.10 (1969), 526-42 (repr. in *Prisca Munimenta: Studies in Archival and Administrative History Presented to Dr A. E. J. Hollaender*, ed. F. Ranger (1973), pp. 88-107); S. E. Kelly, 'Anglo-Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word', in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 36-62, at pp. 40-42.

¹⁵ For the privileged nature of 'bookland', see Keynes, in Owen-Crocker and Schneider, *Kingship, Legislation and Power*.

¹⁶ For the relevant passages of the *Vita Wilfridi* and the *Epistola ad Ecgbertum*, and for further discussion, see Woodman, *Charters of Northern Houses*, pp. 1-6 and 234-35. For other discussions of early Northumbrian charters, see P. Wormald, *Bede and the Conversion of England: the Charter Evidence*, Jarrow Lecture 1984 (Jarrow, 1985) and I. N. Wood, 'The Gifts of Wearmouth and Jarrow',

in *The Language of Gift in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. W. Davies and P. Fouracre (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 89-115. For an interesting discussion of early Northumbrian diplomatic, as revealed by a passage in a letter written by George, Bishop of Ostia and Amiens (753-98), to Pope Hadrian after a visit of papal legates to Mercia and Northumbria in 786, see J. Story, *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Francia, c. 750-870* (Ashgate, 2003), pp. 64-78. For the possible diplomatic elements in Willibrord's autobiographical note in Paris, BnF, lat. 10837, see D. Pelteret, 'Diplomatic Elements in Willibrord's Autobiography', *Peritia*, XXII-XXIII (2011-12), 1-14.

¹⁷ The archives of Abingdon, Canterbury and Worcester constitute the fullest collections of such documents.

¹⁸ For overviews of the York, Beverley, Ripon, Durham and Lowther Castle archives, see Woodman, *Charters of Northern Houses*, pp. 68-75, 187-98, 249-52, 316-35 and 366-67 respectively.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-9 and 380-82.

²⁰ S 407 (*North 1*), discussed below.

²¹ For the conquest of York by vikings, see the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (hereafter *ASC*), s.a. 867. For Northumbria and York in the Anglo-Scandinavian period, see works cited in [fn. 6](#) above.

²² For the viking kingdoms of Dublin and York, see A. P. Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin: the History and Archaeology of Two Related Viking Kingdoms*, 2 vols (Dublin, 1975-9) and Downham, *Viking Kings*.

²³ For the evidence of place-names see, for example, G. Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in Yorkshire* (Copenhagen, 1972); G. Fellows-Jensen, *The Vikings and their Victims: the Verdict of the Names*, The Dorothea Coke Memorial Lecture in Northern Studies delivered at University College London 21 February 1994 (1995); and Abrams and Parsons, in Hines, Lane and Redknap, *Land, Sea and Home*. For sculptural remains, see, for example, R. N. Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture* (1980) and J. T. Lang, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, iii: *York and Eastern Yorkshire* (Oxford, 1991).

²⁴ For useful comments about such divisions and loyalties, see Stafford, *Unification*, pp. 26-27.

²⁵ Nevertheless, Rægnald did make some advances into this area, most famously appropriating some of the land belonging to St Cuthbert's community and re-distributing it to two of his followers: see the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* (hereafter *HSC*), ed. T. Johnson South (Woodbridge, 2002), c. 23 and Hadley, *Vikings*, pp. 41-44.

²⁶ S. Foot, 'The Making of Angelcynn: English Identity before the Norman Conquest', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, VI (1996), 25-49; S. Keynes, 'King Alfred and the Mercians', in *Kings, Currency and Alliances: History and Coinage in Southern England in the Ninth Century*, ed. M. A. S. Blackburn and D. N. Dumville (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 1-45; Keynes, in Reuter, *New Cambridge Medieval History*, III, 459-64; D. Pratt, *The Political Thought of King Alfred the Great* (Cambridge, 2007), esp. 93-111. For the limits of English identity at this time, see G. Molyneux, 'The Old English Bede: English Identity or Christian Instruction?', *English Historical Review*, CXXIV (2009), 1289-1323.

²⁷ See in general the essays collected in *Cultures in Contact*, ed. Hadley and Richards and in *Aspects*, ed. Hall.

²⁸ For Wulfstan I, see S. Keynes, 'Wulfstan I', in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. M. Lapidge, J. Blair, S. Keynes and D. Scragg (Oxford, 1999), pp. 492-93. For Wulfstan's motivations see also Downham, *Viking Kings*, pp. 110-15.

²⁹ See S. Keynes and M. Lapidge, *Alfred the Great: Asser's 'Life of King Alfred' and Other Contemporary Sources* (1983), pp. 48-58. For other views of the purpose of Asser's work, see M. Schütt, 'The Literary Form of Asser's *Vita Alfredi*', *EHR*, LXXII (1957), 209-20; D. P. Kirby, 'Asser and his Life of King Alfred', *Studia Celtica*, VI (1971), 12-35; J. Campbell, 'Asser's *Life of Alfred*', in *The Inheritance of Historiography 350-900*, ed. C. Holdsworth and T. P. Wiseman (Liverpool, 1986), pp. 115-35 (repr. in J. Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (2000), pp. 129-55); A. Scharer, 'The Writing of History at King Alfred's Court', *Early Medieval Europe* (hereafter *EME*), V (1996), 177-206.

³⁰ *Chronicon Æthelweardi*, ed. A. Campbell (1962), IV.3 (s.a. 894), pp. 50-1.

³¹ *ASC D*, s.a. 927.

³² M. Gretsch, *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 332-70; S. Foot, *Æthelstan: the First King of England* (New Haven and London, 2011), pp. 63-93.

³³ M. Lapidge, 'Some Latin Poems as Evidence for the Reign of Athelstan', *Anglo-Saxon England* (hereafter *ASE*), IX (1981), 61-98 (repr. in his *Anglo-Latin Literature, 900-1066* (London and Rio Grande, 1993), pp. 49-86, to which references relate).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-1.

³⁵ The existence, at various junctures in the Anglo-Saxon period, of some kind of centralized agency, dependent on the king, and responsible for the production of royal diplomas, is a subject of great controversy. Nevertheless, the group of Æthelstan diplomas in question are now widely accepted to be

the products of just such an agency in service to the king. For mixed scholarly views about the possible existence of an Anglo-Saxon chancery at different times in the Anglo-Saxon period, see, for example, P. Chaplais, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chancery: from the Diploma to the Writ', *JSA*, III.4 (1966), 160-76 (repr. in Ranger, *Prisca Munimenta*, pp. 43-62); S. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'the Unready' 978-1016: a Study in their Use as Historical Evidence* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 14-153; P. Chaplais, 'The Royal Anglo-Saxon "Chancery" of the Tenth Century Revisited', in *Studies in Medieval History presented to R.H.C. Davies*, ed. H. Mayr-Harting and R. I. Moore (1985), pp. 41-51; C. Insley, 'Charters and Episcopal Scriptoria in the Anglo-Saxon South-West', *EME*, VII (1998), 173-97; S. E. Kelly, *Charters of Abingdon Abbey, Part 1*, Anglo-Saxon Charters vii (Oxford, 2000), pp. lxxi-cxxxi; and S. E. Kelly, *Charters of Glastonbury Abbey*, Anglo-Saxon Charters xv (Oxford, 2012), pp. 118-24.

³⁶ The anonymous title 'Æthelstan A' was first used by R. Drögereit, 'Gab es eine Angelsächsische Königskanzlei?', *Archiv für Urkundenforschung*, XIII (1935), 335-436, at 345-48.

³⁷ For the revolutionary form of these diplomas, see Keynes, in Owen-Crocker and Schneider, *Kingship, Legislation and Power*, pp. 53-55. For the Latin style see S. T. Smith, *Land and Book: Literature and Land Tenure in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto, 2012), pp. 37-47 and 175-81 and D. A. Woodman, '"Æthelstan A" and the Rhetoric of Rule', *ASE*, XLII (2013), 217-48.

³⁸ For the first time in diplomatic history, the diplomas of 'Æthelstan A' consistently provide information about the place of issue, allowing us to follow the King in his peregrinations around the country.

³⁹ S 416 (BCS 677) and S 425 (*CantCC* 106). See the new edition of all charters from Christ Church, Canterbury: *Charters of Christ Church, Canterbury*, ed. N. Brooks and S. E. Kelly, 2 pts, Anglo-Saxon Charters 17-18 (Oxford, 2013). For the conventions involved in citing Anglo-Saxon diplomas, see S. Keynes, 'A Conspectus of the Charters of King Edgar, 957-75', in *Edgar, King of the English, 959-975*, ed. D. Scragg (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 60-80, at pp. 60-62.

⁴⁰ For a full discussion of such variations in the 'Æthelstan A' diplomas, see Woodman, *ASE*, XLII.

⁴¹ For both of these cartularies, see G. R. C. Davis, *Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain and Ireland*, revised by C. Breay, J. Harrison and D. M. Smith (2010), nos. 1086 and 1087 respectively.

⁴² See *English Historical Documents c.500-1042*, ed. D. Whitelock, 2nd edn (1979), pp. 548-51 (no. 104). For a full discussion of the diplomatic of S 407 (*North* 1), see Woodman, *Charters of Northern Houses*, pp. 89-94.

⁴³ This was the view of Stevenson, as quoted in *Early Yorkshire Charters*, vol. I, ed. Farrer, p. 4.

⁴⁴ On boundary-clauses, see K. A. Lowe, 'The Development of the Anglo-Saxon Boundary Clause', *Nomina: Journal of the Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland*, XXI (1998), 63-100, esp. 69-71.

⁴⁵ Unfortunately, no contemporary narrative description of such processes has survived and so this account necessarily involves a certain amount of speculation: for further discussion, see Lowe, *Nomina*, XXI, 65 and Keynes, in Owen-Crocker and Schneider, *Kingship, Legislation and Power*.

⁴⁶ For a detailed discussion, see H. E. J. Le Patourel, 'Amounderness', in *Yorkshire Boundaries*, ed. H. E. J. Le Patourel, M. H. Long and M. F. Pickles (Leeds, 1993), pp. 113-16.

⁴⁷ For a full discussion of all possible reasons why the boundary clause was written in Latin rather than Old English, see Woodman, *Charters of Northern Houses*, pp. 93-94.

⁴⁸ Of course York's acceptance of this document may have come after a period of negotiation with Æthelstan which is hidden from view.

⁴⁹ By the time of Domesday Book, Amounderness had passed into the hands of Earl Tostig: *Domesday Book: Yorkshire (Part One)*, ed. M. L. Faull and M. Stinson (Chichester, 1986), fol. 301v.

⁵⁰ For interesting parallels with the coming to power of Louis the Pious and his use of new diplomatic forms via the overhauling of a Carolingian formulary, see Koziol, *The Politics of Memory and Identity*, pp. 64-65.

⁵¹ For Æthelstan's coins, see C. E. Blunt, 'The Coinage of Athelstan, 924-939: A Survey', in *The British Numismatic Journal, Special Volume for the Seventieth Birthday of Christopher Evelyn Blunt*, XLII (1974), ed. M. Dolley, J. Porteous and H. E. Pagan, pp. 35-160; M. Blackburn, 'The Coinage of Scandinavian York' in *Aspects*, ed. Hall, pp. 335-38; Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 151-57 and 216-19.

⁵² For the idiosyncratic features of Æthelstan's Northumbrian coins, see Blunt, *British Numismatic Journal*, XLII, 89-93 and 114-16. The discovery of the Vale of York hoard in January 2007 increased the number of Northumbrian coins in the name of Æthelstan. Gareth Williams suggests that the hoard was deposited in the immediate aftermath of Æthelstan's conquest of Northumbria, at some point in the period 927-9. Williams also suggests that the presence of precious metal items alongside the coins in the hoard, may mean that there was a 'dual economy' in Northumbria, in which a bullion economy functioned alongside official, 'national' coins. For Williams, this calls 'the extent of Athelstan's authority over the currency into question'. See G. Williams, 'Coinage and Monetary Circulation in the Northern Danelaw in the 920s in the Light of the Vale of York Hoard', in *Studies in Early Medieval Coinage, Volume 2. New Perspectives*, ed. T. Abramson (Woodbridge, 2011), p. 152. For the contents

of the hoard, see B. Ager and G. Williams, 'The Vale of York Viking Hoard: Preliminary Catalogue', in *ibid.*, pp. 135-45.

⁵³ See further the comments of Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 153-54.

⁵⁴ For assessments of the scale of Scandinavian settlement of the north-west, see E. Ekwall, *Scandinavians and Celts in the North-West of England* (Lund, 1918); G. Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West* (Copenhagen, 1985); G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Amounderness and Holderness', *Namn och Bygd*, LXXVIII (1990), 23-30; Rollason, *Northumbria*, pp. 249-55; N. J. Higham, 'Viking-Age Settlement in the North-Western Countryside: Lifting the Veil?', in Hines, *Land, Sea and Home*, pp. 297-311; and R. Watson, 'Viking-Age Amounderness: a Reconsideration', in *Place-Names, Language and the Anglo-Saxon Landscape*, ed. N. J. Higham and M. J. Ryan (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 125-41.

⁵⁵ Fellows-Jensen, *Namn och Bogd*, LXXVIII, 28-9; Hadley, *Vikings*, p. 62.

⁵⁶ For arguments in favour, but also against, the view of this area of the country as a landing-point for Scandinavians travelling from Dublin to York, see F. Edmonds, 'Barrier or Unifying Feature? Defining the Nature of Early Medieval Water Transport in the North-West', in *Waterways and Canal-Building in Medieval England*, ed. J. Blair (Oxford, 2007), pp. 30-33.

⁵⁷ See Hadley, *Vikings*, p. 63 and Rollason, *Northumbria*, p. 263.

⁵⁸ Stafford, *Unification*, p. 33.

⁵⁹ The passage of S 407 (*North 1*) in question reads, 'Hanc pefatam donationem propria et non modica emi pecunia...' ('I bought this aforementioned gift with not a little of my own money...').

⁶⁰ Æthelstan's dealings with frontier zones of his kingdom may have resulted also in his donation of various privileges like sanctuary to different institutions, evidence for which can be found in Cornwall and Northumbria: see J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), p. 224.

⁶¹ For the purpose of this grant, see also Stafford, *Unification*, p. 34.

⁶² Originally based at Lindisfarne, St Cuthbert's community moved to Chester-le-Street in c. 883 after a fabled period of wandering and later moved to Durham in 995, where it remains to this day. See Aird, *St Cuthbert*, pp. 9-59; Rollason, *Northumbria*, pp. 244-48 and Woodman, *Charters of Northern Houses*, pp. 295-99. For a recent discussion of the difficulties in dating some of the relocations by Cuthbert's community so precisely, see A. Woolf, *From Picland to Alba 789-1070* (Edinburgh, 2007), pp. 82-83.

⁶³ See above, fn. 00.

⁶⁴ D. W. Rollason, 'The Wanderings of St Cuthbert', in *Cuthbert: Saint and Patron*, ed. D. W.

Rollason (Durham, 1987), pp. 45-59.

⁶⁵ M. Budny, *Insular, Anglo-Saxon, and Early Anglo-Norman Manuscript Art at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge: An Illustrated Catalogue* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1997), p. 163; and Karkov, *Ruler Portraits*, p. 71. The hand of this scribe in CCCC 183 seems very close to that of the scribe who wrote S 447 (*CantCC* 107), a 939 charter of King Æthelstan from the Christ Church, Canterbury archive (note especially the similarity in the way 'rex' is written in Æthelstan's attestation), and who was also responsible for S 464 (*CantCC* 110) and S 512 (*CantCC* 112), both charters of King Edmund, and both again from the Christ Church, Canterbury archive. This diploma scribe was named 'Æthelstan C' by Drögereit, 'Gab es eine', pp. 373-77. For further discussion, see P. Chaplais, 'The Origin and Authenticity of the Royal Anglo-Saxon Diploma', *JSA*, III.2 (1965), 48-61, repr. in Ranger, *Prisca Munimenta*, pp. 40-41; Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 16 and 44, n. 81; M. Wood, 'The Making of King Aethelstan's Empire: an English Charlemagne?', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society. Studies Presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. P. Wormald with D. Bullough and R. Collins (Oxford, 1983), pp. 254-55; and D. N. Dumville, 'English Square Minuscule Script: the Background and Earliest Phases', *ASE*, XVI (1987), 173-74.

⁶⁶ The importance of the manuscript for the Cuthbertine community is demonstrated by the fact that it was kept on the high altar of the church: see *Rites of Durham Being a Description or Brief Declaration of All the Ancient Monuments, Rites, and Customs Belonging or Being Within the Monastical Church of Durham Before the Suppression. Written 1593*, ed. J. T. Fowler, Surtees Society, CVII (Durham, 1903), pp. 16-17.

⁶⁷ At least four manuscripts were used for this purpose by St Cuthbert's community: Woodman, *Charters of Northern Houses*, pp. 316-23. For the similar, 'Celtic' practice of recording transactions in gospel-books such as the Lichfield Gospels, Bodmin Gospels, Books of Deer and Armagh, see, for example, W. Davies, 'The Latin Charter-Tradition in Western Britain, Brittany and Ireland in the Early Mediaeval Period', in *Ireland in Early Mediaeval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, ed. D. Whitelock, R. McKitterick and D. N. Dumville (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 258-80 and D. Broun, *The Charters of Gaelic Scotland and Ireland in the Early and Central Middle Ages*, Quiggin Pamphlets 2 (Cambridge, 1995), esp. 32-37. This similarity is particularly interesting given that Lindisfarne itself was originally an Ionan foundation.

⁶⁸ S 1660 (*North* 18), S 1659 (*North* 19) and S 1661 (*North* 20).

⁶⁹ For discussion of this practice at Canterbury, see Brooks and Kelly, *Charters of Canterbury*, Part 1, pp. 53-58.

⁷⁰ For discussion of a passage of the *HSC* which may betray a diplomatic source, see below, pp. 00-00.

⁷¹ This image of Cuthbert is seen most clearly in the *HSC*; for further discussion, see T. Johnson South, 'Changing Images of Sainthood: St Cuthbert in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*', in *Saints: Studies in Hagiography*, ed. S. Sticca (New York, 1996), pp. 81-94.

⁷² By the late tenth century, St Cuthbert's community had already undertaken two physical relocations, eventually coming to rest in Durham. These relocations made it increasingly important for Cuthbert's church to stress that it was the very same institution that had begun at Lindisfarne, that had inherited Cuthbert's bones, and with them the lands and rights of the Cuthbertine church. In order to effect this sense of continuity, the Cuthbertines looked inwards, developing a kind of corporate identity as the 'populus sancti Cuthberti', or 'haliwerfolc' as it was known in Old English (see Woodman, *Charters of Northern Houses*, p. 13). It is no wonder, then, that as part of this agenda, their land records took a pointedly different form from the mainstream diplomas used elsewhere at the time in Anglo-Saxon England.

⁷³ H. H. E. Craster, 'The Red Book of Durham', *EHR*, XL (1925), 504-32.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 516.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 516-19.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 522-23 and 531.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 522-23.

⁷⁸ Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de exordio atque procursu istius hoc est Dunhelmensis Ecclesie*, ed. D. W. Rollason (Oxford, 2000), pp. xlii-xliv (hereafter *LDE*).

⁷⁹ It is beyond the scope of this article to comment on Craster's findings and so for present purposes I have accepted his dating and characterisation of the *Cronica*. Craster, *EHR*, XL, 530, has some discussion of the relationship between the *Cronica* and Symeon's *LDE*. A few passages of the *Cronica*, in their inclusion of extra detail, do seem to suggest that the *LDE* was written afterwards, perhaps using the *Cronica* as its source. But the *Cronica* as a whole merits further attention, which may in the future invalidate some of the arguments advanced here. Nevertheless, R. B. Dobson, *Durham Priory 1400-1450* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 378-86, in discussing the writings of Prior Wessington, accepts Craster's conclusions, describing the *Cronica* as 'skilfully reconstituted and printed by Sir Edmund Craster' (at p. 380).

⁸⁰ The whole text of the chronicle can be found in Craster, *EHR*, XL, 523-29.

⁸¹ *HSC*, c. 28 and *LDE*, II 18.

⁸² Craster, *EHR*, XL, 526: ‘...he himself too, removing two armlets from his own arm, with full authority [*or* jurisdiction/power], and vengeance and punishment, outside and inside [i.e. the lands of St Cuthbert], and [with] sake and soke (as is commonly said), that is, with full laws and peace (?), he offered them upon the tomb, striking with a terrible curse anyone who by chance would presume to violate in any way either his own or his predecessors’ privileges collected for this church’.

⁸³ See also Craster, *EHR*, XL, 526, n. 2, where he recorded, but also rejected, a suggestion by Plummer that ‘indome’ could be an error for ‘freodome’. The expression ‘mid fullum friodome’ is well attested in Old English documents, for example S 1510 (*CantCC* 78), a mid-ninth-century will of Badanoth Beotting from the Christ Church, Canterbury archive, and it would certainly make sense in the present context. The entry for ‘-dōm’ in J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Cambridge, 1960), suggests that ‘indome’, if that is the correct reading, could have the meaning of ‘state, condition, power’.

⁸⁴ See F. E. Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs* (Manchester, 1952), pp. 73-78.

⁸⁵ For discussion of these forgeries and the likely date at which they were made, see D. Bates, ‘The Forged Charters of William the Conqueror and Bishop William of St Calais’, in *Anglo-Norman Durham 1093-1193*, ed. D. Rollason, M. Harvey and M. Prestwich (Woodbridge, 1994), pp. 111-24.

⁸⁶ *Durham Episcopal Charters*, ed. H. S. Offler, SS, CLXXIX (Gateshead, 1968), no. 7 where, in detailing the rights of the monks’ court, it is said to have the following liberties: ‘...cum omnibus libertatibus et consuetudinibus que ad curiam pertinent infra burgum et extra cum sacha et soche et tol et team et infangenethf et werech et omnibus regalibus consuetudinibus, que deo auctore beato Cuthberto a regibus Anglie concesse sunt’ (at p. 55). One could compare similar forged royal documents from Durham; see, for example, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, ed. D. Bates (Oxford, 1998), no. 110, which has the clause: ‘Hęc et Omnia alia, que in presenti possident, vel in posterum adquirere iuste poterint, sive de pecunia sancti Cuthberti emerint, ad honorem et ob amorem predicti sancti, in ecclesiis, terris et aquis, villis, planis et pascuis, molendinis, cum sac et socne, tol et team, et infangenthf, et ut curiam suam plenariam, et wrecch, in terra sua, libere et quiete in perpetuum habeant, concedo et confirmo’.

⁸⁷ But see also above, p. 0, fn. 0.

⁸⁸ For the view that this family of forgeries was effected by reference to previous, possibly genuine grants of land and liberties, see Bates, in Rollason, Harvey and Prestwich, *Anglo-Norman Durham*, pp. 111-12.

⁸⁹ Craster, *EHR*, XL, 531, also briefly raised this possibility: ‘...and he gives a fuller account than is to be found in the *Historia* of the privileges accorded by Athelstan’s brothers, Edmund (940-6) and Edred (946-55). It may be that he had access to charters granted by those two kings’.

⁹⁰ For example, S 1661 (*North* 20) has: *se ðe þis awende sy he ascyred from Godes dæle □ from eallum haligdome* (‘he who alters this shall be cut off from any part in God and from all holy things’).

⁹¹ Craster, *EHR*, XL, 526.

⁹² *LDE*, II 20.

⁹³ Craster, *EHR*, XL, 526: ‘he gave [sc. these gifts] (with) full authority (or jurisdiction/power) with his own hand at the tomb of St Cuthbert’.

⁹⁴ Woodman, *Charters of Northern Houses*, pp. 316-23.

⁹⁵ Of course ceremony was also important in the issuing of mainstream diplomas: L. Roach, ‘Public Rites and Public Wrongs: Ritual Aspects of Diplomas in Tenth- and Eleventh-Century England’, *EME*, XIX (2011), 182-203, Koziol, *The Politics of Memory*, pp. 68-9 and Keynes, in Owen-Crocker and Schneider, *Kingship, Legislation and Power*.

⁹⁶ Another difference between these two kingdoms is that no known mint has been identified for Bernicia in the Anglo-Saxon period.

⁹⁷ *HSC*, c. 29.

⁹⁸ For a summary of the difficulties in dating the document, and in identifying Gospatric with certainty, see Woodman, *Charters of Northern Houses*, pp. 363-66.

⁹⁹ For an analysis of its diplomatic form and language, see Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 419-24 and 531-36 and Woodman, *Charters of Northern Houses*, pp. 371-78.

¹⁰⁰ An interesting parallel can be drawn with the accession of Charles the Fat to the West Frankish throne, since he then proceeded round his territories granting a series of diplomas to ecclesiastical institutions. As Koziol, *The Politics of Memory*, pp. 76-81 suggests, the harnessing of this support was necessary if Charles wished to keep his throne.